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ABSTRACT

Each of the 161 National Writing Project sites offers an intensive institute every summer and invites distinguished local teachers of writing from all grade levels, from kindergarten through university, to attend. The institute focuses on these teachers, examining their exemplary classroom practices, supporting their work with research studies, and encouraging them to develop their own writing. These teachers become the teachers of other teachers during the school year, credible as mentors because they come directly from their own classrooms to lead professional development workshops. This report first features a selection of research results from across the country that demonstrate the success of writing project teachers in improving their students' writing achievement. The report then presents a selection of student writing samples from the classrooms of writing project teachers. It also makes a case for why writing is crucial to academic success, workplace success, and lifetime achievement, using supporting data from studies performed by the U.S. Department of Education. Finally, the report offers some key facts about the National Writing Project. (NKA)

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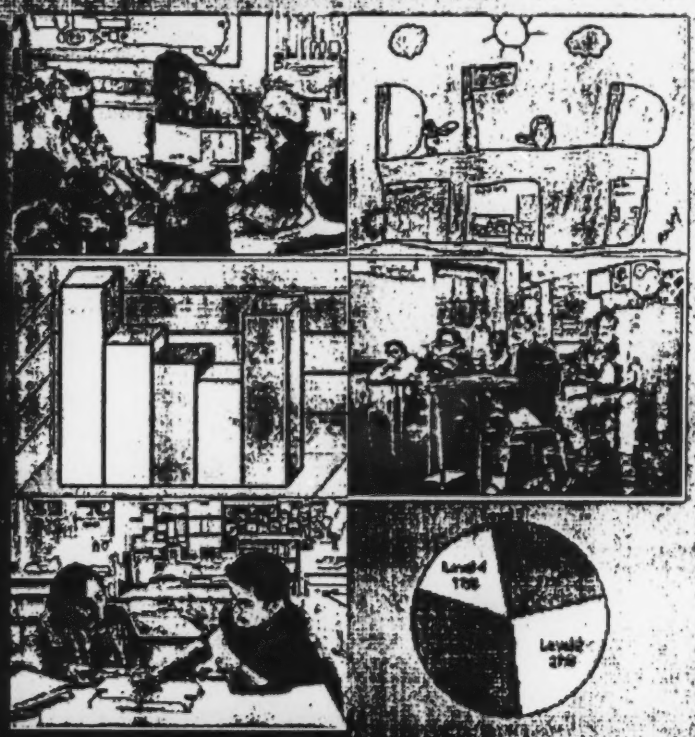
Profiles of the National Writing Project

Improving Writing and Learning in the Nation's Schools



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Effective writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education to future employment. In the business world, as well as in school, students often must convey complex ideas and information in a clear, succinct manner. Inadequate writing skills, therefore, could inhibit achievement across the curriculum and in future careers, while proficient writing skills help students convey ideas, deliver instructions, analyze information, and motivate others.

The Condition of Education 1998, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Profiles of the National Writing Project

Improving Writing and Learning in the Nation's Schools

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Introduction

Now in its 25th year, the National Writing Project (NWP) is a professional development program dedicated to improving writing and learning in our nation's schools. To accomplish this goal, the project looks to successful teachers. Each of the 161 NWP sites offers an intensive institute every summer and invites distinguished local teachers of writing from all grade levels, K-university, to attend. The institute focuses on these teachers, examining their exemplary classroom practices, supporting their work with research studies, and encouraging them to develop their own writing. These teachers become the teachers of other teachers during the school year, credible as mentors because they come directly from their own classrooms to lead professional development workshops.

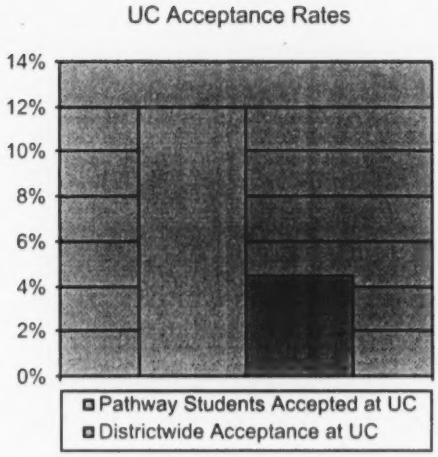
NWP professional development takes place over time as opposed to "one-shot" programs. It is responsive to local needs because local expert teachers are the instructors. And because writing project sites are hosted by universities, the project also fosters ongoing collaboration among university and K-12 faculty.

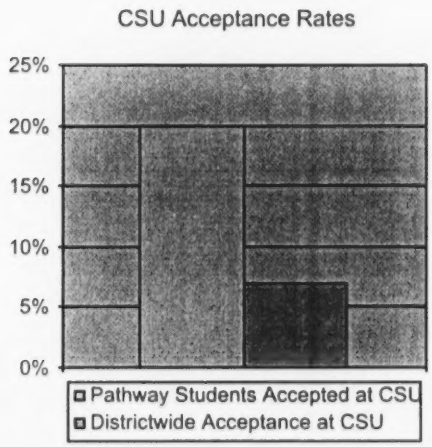
The effectiveness of the NWP model depends on the number of teachers who voluntarily spend their summer vacations, their school-year weekends, and their after-class time in NWP programs. The NWP serves over 150,000 such teachers a year, a total of two million to date. The ultimate beneficiaries of the NWP model are students. Their accomplishments in the hands of writing project teachers are the focus of this publication.

Student Achievement Results

A selection of research results from across the country that demonstrate the success of writing project teachers in improving their students' writing achievement

Second Language Students in California Improve Writing, Reading, School Attendance





Second-language students participating in Pathway, an ongoing collaborative of the University of California Irvine Writing Project, Santa Ana College, and Santa Ana Unified School District have demonstrated significant improvements in writing, reading and attendance over the first two years of the project. SAUSD has the largest ethnic minority population in Orange County (98.5 percent) and one of the largest student populations of English language learners in the nation (72 percent).

Pathway, a reading-writing college preparatory project begun in 1996–97, provides ongoing writing project professional development to thirty-one 6th–12th grade teachers in five middle schools and four high schools as well as to school counselors and assistant principals. Students of Pathway teachers progress as a cadre from one grade level to the next, and their achievement is compared to a control group of similar students.

After the first year of the program, Pathway students' writing test scores improved by one full letter grade, compared to a half-letter grade improvement for control group students. Pathway students also showed better school attendance rates than control group students, and attendance rates improved significantly from the first to the second year of the program.

In addition, 95 percent of the first cadre of graduating Pathway seniors went on to post-secondary education. Twelve percent were accepted to University of California campuses, compared to an overall district acceptance rate of just 3 to 6 percent. Another 20 percent were accepted at California State University campuses, compared to a district rate of 4 to 9 percent. Four percent went to other four-year colleges, and the remaining 59 percent went on to community colleges.

Report to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education, Spring 1998, Carol Booth Olson, Director, UCI Writing Project

At-Risk Mississippi Students Show Academic Gains After Writing Project Intervention

The State Department of Education invited four directors and 12 teachers from writing project sites in Mississippi to design and conduct a staff development program to prepare teachers to teach summer school to at-risk, low-income students, ages 16 to 21, as part of the state's commitment to the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The terms of funding required that students show a combined gain of eight months' achievement in math and reading skills after just six weeks.

The writing project directors and teachers provided a week of intensive workshops for the JTPA teachers in the spring, followed up by four, half-day sessions during the summer school session. Teacher workshops emphasized not only writing, but reading, problem solving, test taking, and writing in mathematics as well.

After the six-week summer school session, the 1,500 JTPA students showed a combined gain from pre- to post-test of 3 years, 4 months: 1 year, 9 months in mathematics and 1 year, 7 months in reading.

Teacher workshops emphasized not only writing, but reading, problem solving, test taking, and writing in mathematics.

"Final Report: Development of Instructional Management Plan, Staff Development, and Evaluation for Summer Youth Remediation Program," Summer 1987, Sandra Burkett and Sherry Swain.

Children of Military Families Abroad Benefit from Long-Term Writing Project Alliance

A writing assessment of 16,000 students in 1997 showed that 81.6 percent scored at the "distinguished" or "proficient" levels.

From 1993 to 1997, the National Writing Project conducted 29 intensive professional development writing workshops for hundreds of teachers on U.S. military bases in nine countries, in support of a Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) worldwide writing assessment of military family students.

The goal of the assessment was for 75 percent of DoDDS students in grades 5, 8 and 10 to write at the "proficient" level or above by the year 2000. (The five levels of achievement include: distinguished, proficient, apprentice, novice and not scoreable.)

After four years of writing project professional development workshops for DoDDS teachers, a writing assessment of 16,000 students in 1997 showed that 81.6 percent scored at the "distinguished" or "proficient" levels. That same year, DoDDS seniors scored an average of 10 points higher on their Verbal SAT tests than their stateside counterparts. Grade 5 DoDDS students scored in the 71st percentile on the language section of the CTBS, and Grade 10 students scored in the 71st percentile in language on the Terra Nova Multiple Assessments, based on a national median percentile of 50.

From "A Marriage that Worked: The Department of Defense Dependents Schools and the National Writing Project," by Mary Ann Smith, in press, *The Kappan*, 1999.

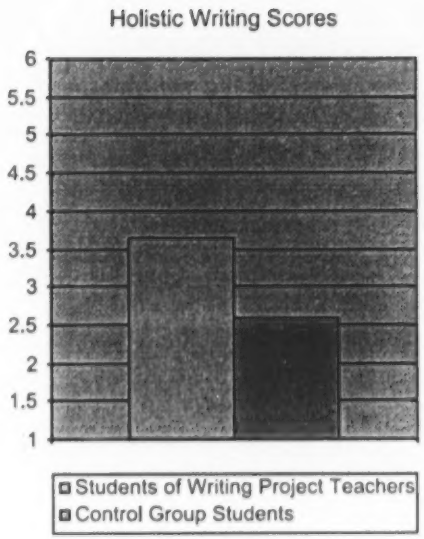
Writing Project Teachers Raise Student Writing Scores in Los Angeles Area

A 1990 study at UCLA sought to discover if the writing of students of writing project teachers differed qualitatively from the writing of students of non-writing project teachers.

Writing samples were collected from 274 junior and senior high school students in the Los Angeles area. Half of the writing samples were collected from inner-city and suburban students of writing project teachers and half were collected from students of a matching control group of five teachers with no writing project experience.

According to holistic scoring results, students of writing project teachers scored an average of 41 percent higher than students of non-writing project teachers (an average score of 3.64 compared to 2.58 on a 6-point scale). A content assessment analysis developed by the study's authors also found that writing project students scored an average of at least 30 percent higher than the control group in all four content areas measured.

The study concluded that "students in the classes of teachers who are writing project fellows write significantly better than students who are not. It is also clear that students' writing improves in direct proportion to the number of writing project fellows they experience as English teachers."



Students of writing project teachers scored an average of 41 percent higher than students of non-writing project teachers.

From "Evaluation Report: The UCLA Writing Project," prepared by Doris L. Redfield, 1991.

New York City High School Students Improve Reading, Writing Skills through Writing Project Program

At every school, core group student scores were significantly higher than comparison student scores.

Results of a 1992–93 study showed that students whose teachers participated in the Writing Teachers' Consortium, a staff development program conducted by the New York City Writing Project and Lehman College, achieved higher scores in reading than comparison group students. Components of the program included school-year inservice, on-site support from writing project teacher consultants, courses at Lehman College, teacher study groups, and a year-long writing program for students.

Seventeen New York City high schools participated in the program, and the study analyzed the scores of a core group of 529 students at five of those schools. At every school, core group student scores on the Degrees of Reading Power test, a holistic measure of text comprehension, were significantly higher than comparison student scores (average of 61.2, compared to 54.6).

The study also found that the core students engaged in 17 different types of writing across all subject areas, supporting one of the program's goals to encourage the use of writing as a tool for promoting learning in a wide variety of subject areas.

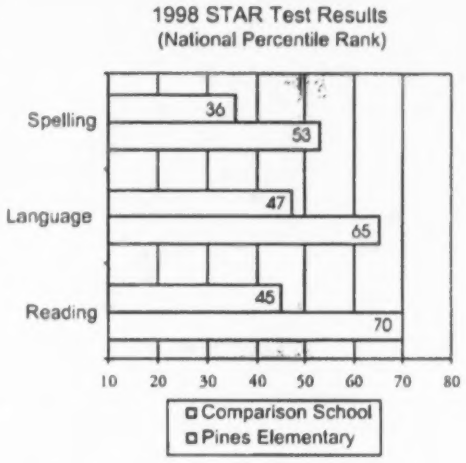
"Writing Teachers Consortium Program, 1992-93," a report prepared by the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, High School Evaluation Unit, Board of Education, City of New York

Northern California Elementary Students Outscore their Peers after 3-Year Writing Project Program for Teachers

From 1995 to 1998, the Northern California Writing Project worked closely with teachers at Pines Elementary School in Paradise, California, providing more than 100 hours of inservice that focused on early literacy and the reading-writing connection.

Results of the 1998 statewide STAR test showed that Pines Elementary second grade students scored substantially higher in reading, language and spelling than students from a comparable neighboring school where there had been no writing project inservice. Second grade students at Pines scored 56 percent higher in reading, 38 percent higher in language and 47 percent higher in spelling than the comparison group of second-graders.

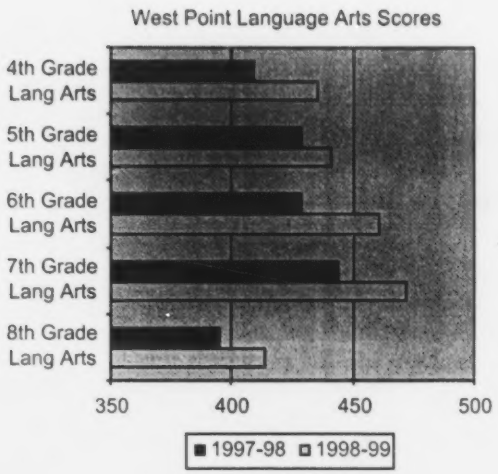
Both are rural schools with similar student populations, except that Pines has a higher percentage of low-income students (52 percent on the free lunch program) compared to the neighboring school (43.5 percent).

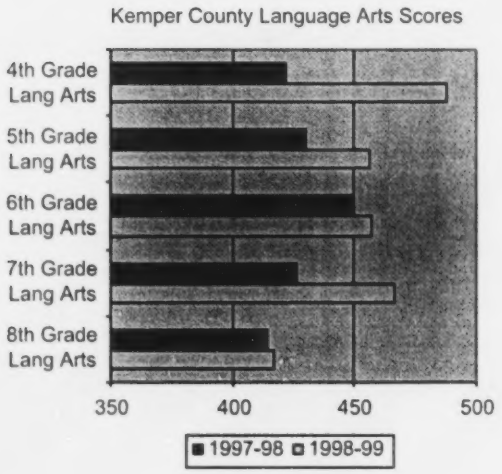


Second grade students at Pines scored 56 percent higher in reading, 38 percent higher in language and 47 percent higher in spelling than the comparison group of second-graders.

1998 Standardized Testing and Reporting program results, California Department of Education

Two Rural Mississippi School Districts Improve Student Scores with Districtwide Writing Project Program





After districtwide implementation of writing project programs in two rural Mississippi school districts in 1998, student achievement showed significant improvement.

In the West Point School District, all teachers in grades 1 through 9 participated in a model writing project program to address national and state standards in reading, language arts and mathematics. The district's statewide performance assessment scores in 1998–99 show improved student achievement in all subject areas. Grades 6 and 7 showed the most improvement, where teachers had participated in a pilot writing project program a year before teachers in other grades. In addition, West Point's district accreditation level rose from 2.3 to 3.0 (on a scale of 1 to 5) that year.

In the Kemper County School District, statewide assessment scores also rose after teachers participated in ongoing writing project professional development during the fall of 1998. Scores show the most dramatic improvement in the fourth grade, where every teacher participated in the program. Scores also improved in other grades where fewer numbers of teachers participated in the writing project program. As a result of improved student achievement, Kemper County's accreditation level rose from 1.7 to 2.3 in 1998.

Study by Mississippi State University Writing /Thinking Project, including data from West Point School District and Kemper County School District, Mississippi.

Louisiana College Students from Writing Project Classrooms Earn Higher Grades, Withdraw Less Often than Peers

At the University of Southwestern Louisiana, first-year students who had been taught by writing project teachers in at least three English/language arts classes in middle school and high school consistently placed in higher level composition courses and achieved better grades than their college peers who had never had a writing project teacher.

The first-year composition grades of 30 writing project students were compared to all first year students (approximately 5,000) at USL in 1995 and 1996. In the spring of 1996, 83 percent of writing project students earned an "A" or "B" grade in English 101, compared to 38 percent of all first-year students. That same semester, 70 percent of writing project students earned an "A" or "B" in English 102, compared to 45 percent of all students. And in the most advanced composition course, English 115, 67 percent of writing project students earned an "A" or "B" compared to 37 percent of all first-year students. Not one writing project student placed in remedial English 90.

Course withdrawal rates in spring 1996 were also significantly different between the two groups. Just 3 percent of writing project students withdrew from English 101, and none withdrew from English 102 or English 115. Among all first-year students, 21 percent withdrew from English 101, 21 percent from English 102, and 36 percent withdrew from the most advanced course, English 115.

In the spring of 1996, 83 percent of writing project students earned an "A" or "B" grade in English 101, compared to 38 percent of all first-year students.

Acadiana Writing Project, University of Southwestern Louisiana, based on 1995-96 Freshmen Composition records, Lafayette, Louisiana.

Schoolwide Writing Project Staff Development Leads to Jump in Connecticut Middle School Student Scores

The percentage of students achieving a level of "excellence" in writing jumped from 15 percent in 1994 to 63 percent in 1996.

Roton School, a Title I school in Norwalk, Connecticut, rose from the lowest scoring to the highest scoring middle school in the district after a year-long writing project staff development program for all teachers at the school in 1995–96.

A comparison of scores on the statewide Connecticut Mastery Test, given to 8th grade students, showed that the percentage of students achieving a level of "excellence" in writing jumped from 15 percent in 1994 to 63 percent in 1996. The percentage of students achieving "excellence" in reading rose from 44 percent to 55 percent during the same time. Additionally, the individual scores of Roton 8th grade students were compared to their 6th grade scores, where dramatic improvements were also demonstrated, including a 152 percent increase in the number of students achieving "excellence" in writing.

The writing project program included three days of teacher staff development in the summer, once a month follow-up sessions at the school throughout the year, and the support of an on-site writing project teacher consultant.

Connecticut Mastery Test scores from Roton School 8th grade, 1994, 1995, 1996, Norwalk, Connecticut

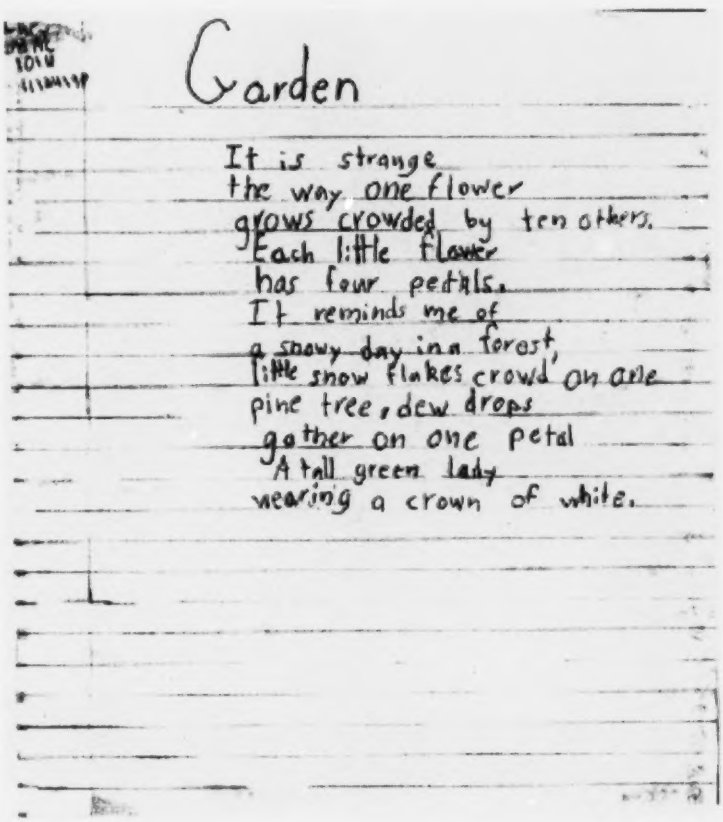
Student Writing Samples

A selection of student writing from the classrooms of writing project teachers

Lucy Cameron, Age 7, Grade 2
Cardiff Elementary School, Cardiff, California

Lucy has the heart of a poet. She carefully chooses words, imagery, and rhythm as she crafts each piece of writing. Lucy's poetry shows how primary students can use close observation as a catalyst for expressive writing.

Kim Douillard & Jan Hamilton, Teachers
San Diego Area Writing Project



Garden

It is strange
the way one flower
grows crowded by ten others.
Each little flower
has four petals.
It reminds me of
a snowy day in a forest,
little snow flakes crowd on one
pine tree, dew drops
gather on one petal
A tall green lady
wearing a crown of white.

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Ashley Marie Williams, Age 8, Grade 2
Davison Avenue School, Long Island, New York

My Trip on the Mayflower

My trip on the Mayflower was fun. I got to get a tour of the ship. Before I left I said good-bye to my family and friends. I met all the Pilgrims and they were nice. They said they liked me too. When it was thundering I told the Pilgrims how scared I was. Some people thought I was a scaredy-cat. But I just ignored them and walked away. The inside Mayflower was humongous. The water was bad. Waves went swish, swash around the boat. It wasn't good when the boat was like that. Two weeks later we arrived at the new land. Everybody aboard the ship was happy that we made it. The Pilgrims talked to the Indians and from that day on they lived happily ever after.

Ashley Marie Williams is a very outgoing, caring and creative child who loves to sing and dance as well as write and illustrate. She is comfortable writing in many genres, which is unusual for a second grader. Ashley's piece and illustration demonstrate the benefits of an enriching classroom experience. Ashley's mother also encourages her to write at home. Instead of sending her off to watch TV, her mother tells her to "read a book and do a book report!"

Emily Shreiber, Teacher
Long Island Writing Project

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Taylor Altman, Age 12, Grade 7
Baldwin Middle School, Baldwin, New York

Taylor Altman is an extraordinary student who enjoys field hockey, gymnastics and music. Taylor's writing resulted from doing a memory chain and then responding to guided questions, techniques incorporated from the New York City Writing Project. Taylor loves reading and writing, and hopes to become a geneticist or a writer.

Heidi Atlas, Teacher
Long Island Writing Project

excerpted from

A Sad Summer

by Taylor Altman

If there is a date that will be forever etched in my memory, it is Wednesday, July 17, 1996. That was the fateful day that TWA Flight 800 crashed off the coast of Long Island. It wasn't a disaster that touched only strangers; it was a very personal tragedy since my mom is a flight attendant for TWA.

For hours my mom sat glued to the television staring, in disbelief, at the burning pieces of wreckage that were continually flashed on the screen. She kept hoping and praying that news would come that survivors had been found. As tears rolled down her cheeks, she hugged me tighter than usual, and I knew then that we were very lucky to have one another.

The next morning would only bring more bad news. Not only did my mom know most of the two crews that were on the flight, but her best friend, Jim, was listed among the dead.

The next few weeks were filled with memorial services and funerals for all my mom's colleagues. She told me story after story about adventures she had with several of her friends that had died aboard Flight 800. It was such an overwhelming tragedy that took so many lives, that I couldn't believe it was real.

During those agonizing weeks for the families of the victims and those involved personally with the disaster, I realized that my mom had to go to work just like always. One day, as she was putting on her uniform for a flight, I asked her if she was afraid. My mom answered, "Yes, I was scared right after the crash, but I'm learning to deal with my fear. None of my friends would have wanted me to stop living." She reassured me that time would help heal our terrible loss.

Time has distanced the impact of Flight 800, but not the memory of those whose lives were so cruelly snuffed out one summer's night. The pain and heartbreak are still there, but my sadness has been replaced by love and hope; a tribute to the enduring strength of the TWA family.

Deirdre Griffin, Age 12, Grade 7
Hyattsville Middle School, Hyattsville, Maryland

excerpted from

Advantages and Disadvantages to Living in Prince George's County

by Deirdre Griffin

There are many advantages to living in Prince George's County. For example, we are only about 20 minutes away from the capital of the United States, Washington DC. Also, to get there, people don't have to cross any bridges, which could be a major hold up if a bridge closed down. This is good for the people who have jobs downtown, but want to live in a suburban town such as Hyattsville or University Park.

Prince George's County is near the Chesapeake Bay. This is interesting because there is so much wildlife. The Potomac River, which is also near us, is nice for recreational purposes.

I think that a very important thing to have in a neighborhood is very friendly neighbors. In most of the towns in our county, there is a very nice feeling of friendliness between you and the people around you.

There are also many disadvantages in Prince George's County. A lot of things that need to be improved pertain to traffic and shopping centers.

It is really terrible how the county is cutting down trees to build places like CVS or 7 ELEVEN. These places are fine, but I don't see why we have to have one every mile and a half. For example, right across from Prince George's Plaza, there was a forest there, and it was recently cut down and another CVS is going to be built there. I don't see why people really need another one when there is one right across the street in Prince George's Plaza, not to mention the other CVS five minutes away in College Park!

For my own town, Hyattsville, I say "thumbs up." For Prince George's County, however, I say "thumbs sideways."

In addition to writing, Deirdre's many talents include acting, drawing and dancing. This past winter holiday, Deirdre danced in The Nutcracker *with the Washington School for Ballet at the Warner Theatre in Washington, DC. During her elementary school years, she appeared in school productions at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre and the Lansburgh Shakespeare Theatre.*

Patricia Bradford, Teacher
District of Columbia Area Writing Project

Marta Borková, Age 14, Grade 8
Moscow Junior High School, Moscow, Idaho

Marta Borková moved to the United States from the Czech Republic in 1992 and excels in both art and writing. Marta entered "Another Necessity," in the Elks' Americanism Essay contest. Limited to fewer than 150 words, most students struggle with the essay prompts, but Marta used the prompt to create a focused piece. Her essay won first place in the girls' division of the contest. Marta also served as the art editor for Ursa Major, *Moscow Junior High's art and literary magazine.*

Susan Hodgin, Teacher
Northwest Inland Writing Project

Another Necessity

by Marta Borkova

Among the many things we need in order to make it through life are food, water, and friends. But what about education? Do we consider education a necessity? I do!

Education is one of the most important parts of my life. If I were uneducated I would not only look and feel bad, but I would also eventually become socially oppressed. Would you rather be around someone completely illiterate, or someone who knows what they're talking about?

One misconception about education is that you only receive it through school. That isn't true! Education can be anything you learn, whether you learn it in school, at home, or wherever. Also, being educated could not only make your life better, but you could help someone else in need.

So even though it may seem like a drag sometimes, staying in school and receiving a proper education is really worth it in the end!

First Place
Elks' Americanism Essay Contest
Girls' Division
1996

Dedra L'nae McDowell, Age 15, Grade 9
Butler Traditional High School, Louisville, Kentucky

excerpted from

Traces Of Me

by Dedra L'nae McDowell

I hate my old house now. The family who just moved in tore it up. They don't know how to appreciate a good thing. A house, my house, that was once filled with love and memories is now left with nothing but loneliness and fading traces of me.

I see the house a lot. It looks terrible. It makes me mad because I remember the times we decorated the house for holidays and the many birthday parties I had there. There was never any hot apple pies in the large windowsills or smoke puffing from the chimney like an old man with a pipe. Nor was there 100's of acres of woods and wild life in the backyard. Still, it was home.

3732 River Park Drive wasn't just an address. It was the place where my family and I grew. I know there's always a time to change but like they say, you never miss your water 'til your well runs dry. I remember being happy about the move. I just didn't know how much I'd really miss the house. We moved because the neighborhood was getting bad. I don't miss the neighborhood, I miss the house and my father. When we moved, it was like we moved away from the house and him. I hope it was for the better.

I'll miss the old records that got lost in the moving process. I'll miss the cold hard wood floors on my feet and the summer days spent on the porch. I'll miss yard cleaning day and the big windows by my bed. I'll miss the privacy of the basement where we played McDonald's and the smell and the mysteriousness of the attic. I'll miss the rainbow wallpaper and the extra bathroom door. I'll miss the back porch full of my daddy's junk. I'll miss it all but I'll never forget. And as the traces of me in the house fade away my memories of it will always stay.

Memories are forever
forever yours to keep
in your heart, in your mind
and as you lay to sleep.

Dedra McDowell pinpoints the beginning of her writing career as the year spent in fifth grade with her "favorite teacher ever," and has since focused on creating poetry and short stories. This memoir came about after Dedra and her mother drove past their old home and were upset by the way it looked. "I decided to write it down so I could remember," Dedra said, "and then my father kept coming into the story." In her writing she combines poetic sensory descriptions with the reflection that comes with distance and maturity. Dedra, herself a talented step, tap, and ballet dancer, volunteers her time teaching 7th and 8th graders at the Park Hill Recreation Center in Louisville.

Sherry Ederheimer, Teacher
Louisville Writing Project

Nate Carsten, Age 18, Grade 12
Monterey High School, Monterey, California

Nate Carsten, a high school senior, enjoys challenging himself. Eagle Scout, wrestler, NJROTC leader, and lover of the writings of Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Nate is always stretching himself. In his writing, Nate never takes the easy way out and frequently chooses to grapple with tough questions of philosophy and theology.

Nancy Harray, Teacher
Central California Writing Project

excerpted from

Self Discipline: The First Step Toward Becoming a Leader

by Nate Joseph Carsten

"Discipline yourself Carsten!" I still remember my wrestling coach hollering across the mat as I wrestled my very first match. The fear, the excitement and the pain of losing still linger vividly in my memory. As a freshman, a rowdy, obnoxious and self absorbed fourteen year old, I honestly had no idea what the words "discipline yourself" meant. All I really knew was that when Coach Dixon asked me after the match whether or not I had run after practice and had eaten correctly, the answer was always "yes", regardless of whether or not I had not even considered running and had intentionally gorged myself on Snickers and Hershey chocolate bars the night before. Nonetheless, I was a freshman, and the word "discipline" conveniently fit though the slot that went completely in one ear and out the other. Ironically, as an Eagle Scout and the cadet commanding officer of my NJROTC unit four years later, I realize that lessons I would learn in self discipline from wrestling and scouting would provide a path to success, not just in those activities, but in all aspects of my life.

I know that as I grow and progress further into the school year, my self discipline will be tested both mentally and physically: Because of my prior experiences with self discipline, I will be better able to meet the challenges and shoulder the weighty demands of leadership. I also know that as I am developing as a leader, I am being observed, not only by my superiors, but also by my peers and subordinates. They expect me to set the example and be the most disciplined person in the unit, and that is what I wholeheartedly strive to be.

A leader's foundation is his ability to be self disciplined in all areas of life, while on the job and off. Therefore, a self disciplined person will always be a dependable person who will fulfill all responsibilities without direct supervision. In the words of Admiral Arleigh Burke, "A well-disciplined leader is one who works with enthusiasm, willingness and zest to fulfill his mission with the expectation of success."

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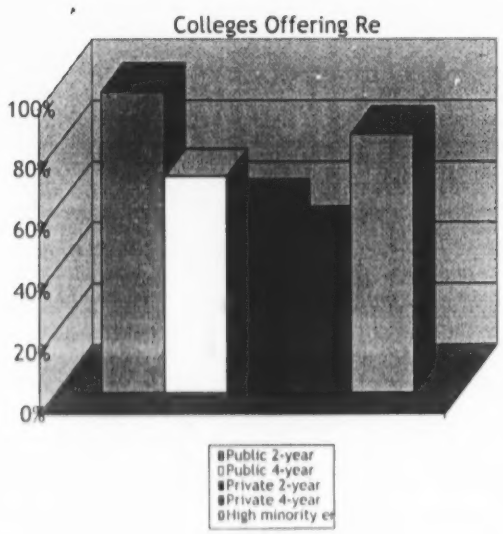
A Case for Writing

Why writing is crucial to academic success, workplace success and lifetime achievement

Writing is Central to Academic Success



In 1995, almost all public 2-year institutions offered remedial writing courses, while about three-quarters of public 4-year institutions offered remedial writing.

Universities are forced to provide remedial writing education for large numbers of students:

- About half of all freshmen entering the 22 California State University campuses need remedial help in English, according to results of the university's 1998 placement tests. "The large number of college students in remedial classes means taxpayers are paying twice to educate the same young people in basic algebra, reading and writing, skills the students should have mastered before they left elementary and high school. Educators are especially troubled that even exemplary school systems are still graduating high school students who cannot spell or write a sentence in which the subject and verb agree." [1]
- In 1995, almost all public 2-year institutions offered remedial writing courses, while about three-quarters of public 4-year institutions offered remedial writing. About half of all private 4-year institutions offered remedial writing courses. And 85 percent of high minority enrollment colleges offered remedial writing.[2]
- In 1995, a larger percentage of institutions with high minority enrollment offered remedial reading and writing courses than institutions with low minority enrollment.[3]

[1] *SF Chronicle*, Nov. 3, 1998
[2] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Remedial Education at Higher Education Institutions in Fall 1995.*
[3] Ibid.

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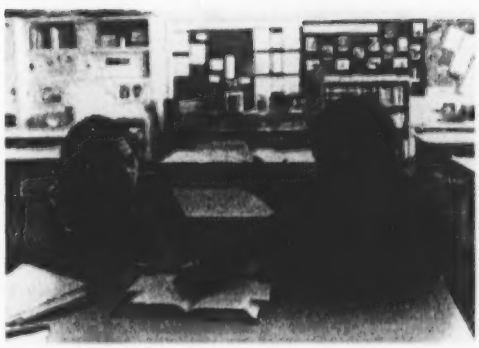
Writing is Central in the Workplace

Lack of writing skills affects both individual and corporate success:

- The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that illiteracy costs U.S. businesses about $225 billion a year in lost productivity. Executives acknowledge illiteracy but they don't necessarily think it's their problem to fix. In a 1995 Opinion Research Corporation survey of Fortune 1000 CEOs, 82 percent of those surveyed say that state and local school systems have primary responsibility to boost workers' literacy rates.[1]
- High percentages of workers report that they frequently write on the job: 54 percent report frequently writing reports, 45 percent frequently write on forms, and 40 percent frequently write memos. In order to match education with current writing demands in the workplace, greater emphasis on writing skills seems necessary.[2]
- A survey of more than 300 executives found that while 71 percent reported that basic written communication training was critical to meeting their workplaces' changing skills demands, only 26 percent of companies offered this kind of training.[3]
- Seventy-five percent of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties.[4]



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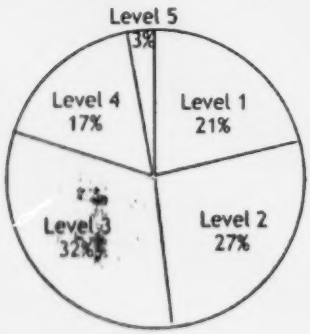
[1] "Illiteracy at Work," Shelly Reese, *American Demographics*, April 1996.
[2] "Literacy Practices in Today's Workplace," Larry Mikulecky, for the National Institute for Literacy.
[3] "Fact Sheet on Workforce Literacy," National Institute for Literacy
[4] Ibid.

Writing is Central to the Economy

1992 National Adult Literacy Survey



Forty-eight percent of adult Americans demonstrated literacy skills in the lowest two levels on the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey.

When too many children grow into non-literate adults, the U.S. economy suffers:[1]

- Twenty-one to 23 percent of U.S. adults, roughly 44 million people, demonstrate literacy skills at the lowest level of the five-level scale developed for the National Adult Literacy Survey. An additional 27 percent, or 50 million adults, demonstrate literacy skills at only the second lowest level. 'African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander adults were more likely than white adults to perform in the lowest two literacy levels.
- Individuals demonstrating higher levels of literacy are more likely to be employed, work more weeks in a year, and earn higher wages than individuals demonstrating lower proficiencies.
- Nearly 50 percent of all adults performing in the lowest level of literacy were living in poverty, compared with 4 to 8 percent who performed in the two highest proficiency levels.
- Adults performing in the higher levels of literacy were more likely than those in the lower levels to report voting in a recent state or national election.
- The literacy proficiencies of young adults assessed in 1992 were somewhat lower than the proficiencies of young adults who participated in the 1985 literacy survey.

[1] 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, conducted by the Educational Testing Service for the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Writing is Central to Standards in All Disciplines

Writing is a key component in national, state and district standards for all subject areas.

In New York City,[1] for example, the Board of Education has embarked on a new standards project in which the centrality of communication, and of writing in particular is a feature across the standards for each discipline. The English Language Arts standards emphasize writing for critical analysis; this skill has an analog in both the mathematics and science standards. The science standards ask students to argue in writing from evidence and to critique published materials. The mathematics standards ask students to communicate logical arguments clearly and to analyze in writing the process of working through particular mathematical problems.

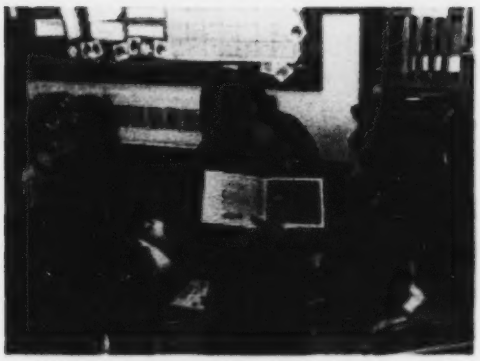
Standards such as these assume a sophisticated conceptual understanding of content and considerable control over the forms and conventions of written discourse. In our country's standards-based environment, academic and workforce literacy depends to a large degree on the ability to write abundantly and well.

As in many states across the country, in each of the five Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) High School Tests—reading, writing, science, mathematics, and social studies—students are required to use writing to predict, explain, persuade, and problem solve in all disciplines.[2]

In our country's standards-based environment, academic and workforce literacy depends to a large degree on the ability to write abundantly and well.

[1] New York City Writing Project, City University of New York
[2] Third Coast Writing Project, Western Michigan University

Writing is Central to theTeaching of Reading*



Because the two processes are so similar, students learn literacy concepts and procedures through both reading and writing.

Writing supports children's reading development in at least three ways:

1. **Readers and writers use the same intellectual strategies,** including organizing, monitoring, questioning, and revising meaning, and children grow in their ability to use these strategies through both reading and writing activities. The biggest difference between good and poor readers and good and poor writers is their strategy use, not their skill use.
2. **The reading and writing processes are similar.** The first step in both processes, for example, involves activating prior knowledge and setting purposes. Because the two processes are so similar, students learn literacy concepts and procedures through both reading and writing.
3. **Children use many of the same skills in both reading and writing.** Phonics is a good example of this transfer. Children use phonics skills to decode words in order to become fluent readers, and they also use their phonics knowledge to "sound-out" the spelling of words and apply spelling rules.

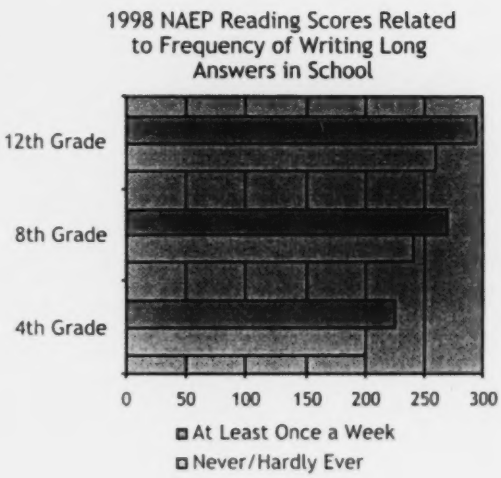
* Gail E. Tompkins, author of *Literacy for the Twenty-first Century: A Balanced Approach* (1997). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

NAEP Data Illustrate the Reading-Writing Connection

An excerpt from the NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card*

Most educators today agree that integrating reading and writing benefits the development of literacy. Numerous studies have shown that reading development does not take place in isolation; children develop simultaneously as readers, listeners, speakers, and writers. The NAEP reading assessment recognized the importance of these interrelationships by asking students and teachers questions about the ways in which reading and writing are combined in their classrooms.

Students in the NAEP 1998 reading assessment were asked how frequently in school they were asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading. Students who said they wrote long answers on a weekly basis had higher scores than those who said they never or hardly ever did so.



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* *1998 Reading Report Card*, National Assessment of Education Progress, National Center for Education Statistics, February 1999.

Key Facts about the National Writing Project

- *Founded at UC Berkeley in 1974*
- *161 sites in 47 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico*
- *Includes grades K-16, all disciplines*
- *Serves over 100,000 teachers every year*
- *Over 2 million teachers served to date*

Support for the National Writing Project is provided by a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education

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